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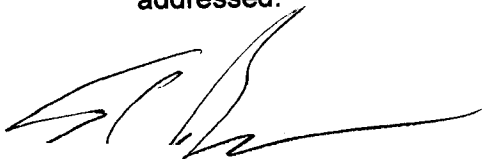
To: Chief of Naval Personnel, 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN, 38055-4400

Subject : Norwegian National Defence College End of Tour Report

Reference: DEPCHNAVPERS MILLINGTON TN 101140Z AUG 98

Enclosures: (1) Information for potential students  
(2) Facts on Norwegian Defence (brochure)

1. The Norwegian National Defence College, *Forsvarets Høgskole*, is Norway's highest educational institution for both military and civilian personnel, and is aimed at those expected to reach Flag rank, Minister/Secretary level, or Chief Executive Officer. Most attendees were surprised to hear that it is a career dead end for the American attendee, and that the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps (who alternate in providing one O-5/6 student) do not utilize either the extensive Norwegian language capability or the comprehensive knowledge of Nordic conditions thus acquired.
2. This educational tour has been, without question, the most interesting and personally rewarding of my Naval career, with the somewhat professionally disappointing caveat noted above. Norway's strategic importance as an energy resource provider (petroleum exports second only to Saudi Arabia), and as a NATO partner with a Russian border, cannot be overstated. Though Russia presents no immediate threat, Norway's importance to the US and Europe far overbalances its' tiny (4 million) population. Additionally, the natural geographic beauty of Norway is unsurpassed, and the recreational opportunities boundless. Norwegians are pleasant, very "American" in many ways, well educated, and prosperous. Norway is an easy place to live and work in, if very expensive.
3. This report, per the reference, provides some background on Norway, the National Defence College (NNDC), and other information relevant to potential US students.
4. I have three recommendations in regard to our program at the NNDC:
  - a) Continue the program. Norway will only grow in strategic importance in the future, and its' oil-and-gas and fisheries resources will dominate European energy and food issues more and more.
  - b) Use the acquired experts. Past attendees follow-on assignments have included ROTC units, Okinawa staffs, and a variety of other unrelated jobs. A concerted effort should be made to use the Norwegian language expertise (which confers fair capability in Swedish and Danish as well), and the Nordic area knowledge acquired, in relevant positions. Possibilities include attaché and defense cooperation billets, NATO staffs, intelligence activities, and others.
  - c) Rectify long-standing administrative issues. The schism between the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) and the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), who alternate in administrative support of the Navy or Marine Corps student, must end. The present status results in a situation where no one in DAO or ODC has recent experience in supporting the NNDC attendee, and therefore constantly must "reinvent the wheel". Additionally, the inequity in pay resulting from the DAO, ODC, and NATO personnel in-country receiving relief from the 23% Value-added Tax (VAT), while the students (at NNDC and the Staff School) and exchange personnel (totaling only 5-6 people) do not, needs to be addressed.



21 JUN 2000

## **Information for potential students at Forsvarets Høgskole**

The following may be helpful for future attendees at the Norwegian National Defence College(NNDC), *Forsvarets Høgskole*, in Oslo, Norway. The spelling of 'defense' in the British manner is intentional, as that is the custom in Norway. The material following is organized roughly in the sequence it took in my case.

- Orders: I received orders in July for an October convening of language school in Washington DC. Plenty of time to execute orders, the surprise was them coming in the middle of the tour I was in at the time. Had to take the Defense Language Aptitude (DLAB) test and get a suitable score before hard-copy orders were sent.
- DLAB is an odd test, which assesses one's ability to learn language. It is ancient (1950's) and held in some disdain by language scholars outside the defense system, I have found. In any case, it is partly written and partly tape-recorded and must be proctored. I did not have a good feeling about it when I was done, but scored quite high....and have since found my aptitude is not so great, so I am not sure what the utility of this is.
- DLI/Inlingua. The Defense Language Institute in Monterey does not offer Norwegian because of the low throughput of students. Hence one will go to a private contracted school, or to the Foreign Service Institute (State Dept). I went to Inlingua in Arlington, Virginia. Of note, it is usually NOT permitted to have spouses in the class unless you are on diplomatic (e.g. DAO, ODC) orders. I had four people in my class, two Army FAO's and an Air Force exchange pilot. The course runs 6 months and how your orders are written determines if it is PCS or TEMDUINS. TAD is unlikely to be approved by the Bureau because of the per diem costs. All classes are in civvies (as is the *Forsvarets Høgskole*) but civilian clothes allowance is not in the picture for Navy personnel. Marines who have come here have received clothing allowances.
- Admin in the US. You and your family members MUST have passports AND NATO orders. PSD will not want to give passports; we got our own. NATO orders do not suffice to travel to Russia, which the school does three times over the academic year.
- DLPT. The Defense Language Proficiency Test is administered at the end of the language class. It is a written and conversational test administered over the telephone from DLI. Per this test, I am a moderately proficient linguist. But I can assure you this is quite misleading as to how well you will be able to actually function in Norwegian. The testing at the International Summer school is similar but current...the DLPT was written in 1957.

- Arrival Norway. The Embassy will pick you up if you ask them to, and put you in a reasonably priced (for Norway) hotel. The housing market here is startlingly tight. The Embassy housing people are courteous but have no duty to help you. Families with small children or several children probably ought not to come over until housing is arranged. Feeding a family while in the hotel would also be difficult, as restaurant prices are extremely high. My wife and I found the hotel a bit close with only the two of us. Expect to spend about \$150.00/ day at least while in the hotel. It took us almost two months to find a house and move in, and this is apparently typical. There may be opportunities to take a house from an ODC person transferring, as they are not in the Embassy housing pool (for which you are not eligible). Early contact is key. A good place to look at the housing market, once some ability in Norwegian is obtained, is at [www.eiendom.no](http://www.eiendom.no) and [www.aftenposten.no](http://www.aftenposten.no)
- Funds. Before you get an apartment or house you will need a Norwegian bank account. This entails getting a fødselsnummer (like an SSN) from the government here, and this takes about two weeks. You should apply (banks have the form) as soon as you arrive. You will have to put up 2-3 months advance rent as security. A typical small 3 bedroom house rent is around \$2000.00/mo. PSD SHAPE (Belgium) services. There is some sort of extra funding available if you are not able to come up with the deposit. The cost of living here is very high, roughly half again that of the Washington DC area, but you get a major COLA. The chief gripe is the 23% VAT, which Embassy people get refunded but you do not. Personal checks up to \$1000.00 can be cashed at the Embassy but take a long time to clear. Checks can be used in the banks but there is a substantial (\$20.00) charge. A sort of personal money order, called a Giro, is used for bills etc. here rather than checks. You will need a Norwegian account to receive travel pay from NNDC also. The Embassy cashier will not take 3<sup>rd</sup> party checks, so be prepared to do some banking by mail back to the US (e.g. TRICARE reimbursement checks can't be cashed here.)
- The Embassy has some facilities and services. Air Force and Marine personnel in-country not directly assigned to the Embassy will report to ODC, Navy and Army to DAO. This is not particularly efficient administratively, but is done simply to share the load. The embassy has a post office, cashier, and small store. All have limited and not always convenient hours but are greatly useful. There is an Exchange at the Air Force support point in Stavanger, but it is limited and not worth the 6 hour drive, in my opinion. This may go away if the NATO command there is disestablished, now under discussion
- The International Summer School, which will be funded by CNET if you ask them to, as follow-on language training, is a great experience. It is at the University of Oslo and has several levels. I recommend the Trinn III, as it is about the level you should be at when you get here. It is quite intense, however, and my predecessors took the Trinn II, more of a review. The

student body is quite varied: in my class of 18 people we had 15 nations represented. The class runs 6 weeks, and following Trinn III you will take the Norwegian national-level language proficiency exam. This is required for professionals working here (doctors, lawyers, etc). Further information at [www.uio.no/iss](http://www.uio.no/iss)

- Forsvarets Høgskole, the Norwegian National Defence College, is an interesting institution. You will attend two separate but very similar courses, the Total Defence (*Totalforsvarkurs*) and the Main (*Hovedkurs*). Total Defence runs from August through October, and the Main from January through June. The period from November through January is open, more on this later. The two classes are very close in content, with the Main course going into more depth. The Main class also involves extensive travel, about 1 week away each month. Both classes rely completely on invited guest speakers, usually two a day, and group work sessions in 8-9 person groups. These groups require internal briefings and periodic presentations to the other working groups, which will entail some PowerPoint on your part. This is initially intimidating and I often had to resort to English during these briefs, but eventually became proficient and confident enough to conduct fairly sophisticated briefs in Norwegian. The school staff acts only as administrators and coordinators, a sometimes frustrating condition. The curriculums are not academically rigorous, no tests or papers, etc. The student body is around 30 at a time, with 1-3 foreigners. I was the only non-Norwegian in my Main course. All classes are in Norwegian except those given by foreigners or in other countries.
- The two month Total Defence course is oriented to those students who cannot be spared from their positions for the 6-month duration of the Main course. They tend to be the "hot runners" of Norway's military, government, and business organizations. For example, my class included several O-6 ranked officers who made Flag/Brigadier rank the following year, the present Chief of Staff to the King, and the COO of Raufoss AG, a large munitions company. This course acts mostly as language and context training for you, a little backwards as one's fellow classmates are "movers and shakers" in this course.....:
- Whereas in the Main course they are a bit more ordinary, though still a highly selected bunch. The Main course (and the Total Defence course) has five periods of study: Military defense; Civil organisation and defense; Global security issues; European/Nordic security; and national crisis management. In each period the working groups are restructured and you will have to opportunity to lead a group. Each period also has a major trip associated with it: we began with eastern Norway in January, mostly military installations; February in northern Norway, including visiting Svalbard and Murmansk (Russia); March to Washington and Norfolk; April to Europe (10 days – Warsaw, Berlin, Paris, Caen, London, and Brussels); and June to the Baltic

(Riga, Helsinki, St Petersburg). My wife was able to travel with us to Europe and the Baltics, though this was somewhat of a favor from the school director in recognition of the fact that I was the only foreigner in the school. Doesn't hurt to ask. No kids, though.

- Family items. We do not have children, so many of the associated issues were transparent to us. The Norwegian school system is reputedly excellent, has significant provisions for non-Norwegian speakers, and DODDS will pay for tutoring as well. Exchange people here in Rygge, Bergen, and Bodø use the Norwegian schools, but most people in the Oslo area use the International School ([home.sol.no/~ois-it](mailto:home.sol.no/~ois-it) , [oslo.is@online.no](mailto:oslo.is@online.no) ) PO box 53, N-1318 Bekkestua, Norway. This is a British private school teaching in English, all grades through high school (no relation to the International Summer School at the University of Oslo discussed above). Bekkestua is a suburb of Oslo to the west, about a 40 minute commute. Employment of family members is possible at the School as well as the Embassy. It is possible to work on the Norwegian economy, but a visa and language proficiency are usually required. US certificates, such as nursing, are generally not recognized here.
  - Medical and Dental here in Norway is very good. The NNDC has medical and dental clinics you can use, but not your family. I can vouch for Oslo Privat Tannlege for dental and Volvat Medisinske Senter for medical. TRICARE pays all, also dependents, via the ODC or DAO office. Embassy cashier will not cash these however, so keep your US bank account and get some bank-by-mail envelopes.
  - Norwegian military organization parallels our own, for no good reason, as they are about 1/100<sup>th</sup> the size and cannot really afford the inefficiencies of separate services. They also have no professional enlisted (a common condition in the Nordic's) so most things are done by officers. For example, the NNDC travel coordinator, which I think would be a Chief or 1<sup>st</sup> class PO in our system, is an Army Captain here. They also have no "up-or-out" policy, so 20+ year O-3's are common. They do not retire with pension until age 56 (at the earliest). They can take leaves of absences; taking a few years off to try something else, or to sail around the world etc, is not particularly unusual.
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- Free time. You will have lot. Cross-country skiing is huge here, as is ski jumping, soccer, handball, cycling, hiking, fishing, hunting....if it is outside, they do it here. We chose to live in Oslo proper, on the edge of the Nordmarka, a forested recreation area surrounding Oslo, with over 2000 kilometers of marked trails, 200 of which are lit in winter. This is ideal for

running, mountain biking, and hiking. I also attended Commander's Winter Warfare School and spent a week on a Norwegian submarine in the period between the Total Defence course and the Main course. The HHDC will arrange this for you if you wish, or other options. Or you can "slapp av" and enjoy Norway. The Embassy may tag you for extra duties in this period also, I was tasked to assist in security arrangements for a Presidential visit. But you will have a lot of free time, and all Norwegian holidays off (though not US ones). Be sure to get a good guidebook in the US, and a good map of Oslo and Norway once here (really good maps of Norway are not found in the US). The city of Oslo is interesting and varied, very safe, and has a superb public-transit system. We almost never drive...no need to.

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